

## **Testimony of Daniel Mack in Opposition to HB7192**

**March 20th, 2019**

Distinguished Madam Chair McCarthy Vahey and Chairman Cassano, and Honorable Members of the Planning and Development Committee,

I write to oppose HB7192 and any future legislation that would propose to study or effectuate the removal of existing town control of schools. I moved to Wilton in part because it has an excellent school system. I believe local control and accountability are crucial to preserving the high level of education currently offered. I understand that Connecticut has serious budget problems and is justifiably looking for cost efficiencies, but we must find a way to do so in a way that does not damage the quality of education for the children in our communities.

The Wilton school system is one of the town's most attractive features and is also a feature of neighboring towns. If Wilton's academic reputation is called into question by the formation of powerful commissions with limited accountability, property values, which are already in decline, would fall even more dramatically, as residents flee to any neighboring towns less impacted or to states such as Florida and Texas which are more taxpayer friendly. There is the potential to create a situation in Wilton where many of our neighbors are a job loss or medical emergency away from losing their homes—a situation akin to the 2008 housing crisis. Also, as many wealthy Fairfield County residents work in finance, it is relatively easy for them to move states, as we have already seen in certain high-profile cases. The fleeing of the state by high earners will erode the income tax revenue base and compound the State's problems.

Please leave our schools in local control. They are functioning well. Citizens of Wilton are happy with them.

Thank you again for considering my testimony. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

Daniel Mack

Wilton, CT